

**Storm Water Public Education Program
Resident Population Telephone Survey
- Executive Summary and Conclusions -**

**Prepared for:
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and
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Executive Summary

Campaign Approach

- To maximize its impact within a limited budget, the “Erase the Waste” campaign leverages learnings from previous public education efforts in several ways. In particular:
 - The campaign’s messages are aimed at changing the attitudes and behaviors of specific groups of County residents, Neat Neighbors, Fix It Foul-Ups and Rubbish Rebels, based on the 1997 segmentation research that revealed that these groups account for relatively high volumes of storm water relevant pollutants and, in the case of Neat Neighbors and Fix It Foul-Ups, are open to changing their polluting behavior if given a good reason to do so.
 - The messages focus on consequences of polluting behavior such as threats to health, child health/safety and the appearance and quality of life in residents’ own neighborhoods because earlier research showed these concerns to be more compelling to residents than more general threats of harm to the environment.
 - Each message targets a specific polluting behavior and suggests direct action that residents can take to reduce their polluting behavior or to get involved in clean-up activities.
- With this targeted approach, the current campaign did not:
 - Attempt to reach all possible audiences (e.g., residents segments known as Prove It To Me Polluters, Preoccupied Polluters and Concerned Non-Contributors were not targeted).
 - Target all possible polluting behaviors (e.g., polluting behaviors related to lawn and garden care and automobile maintenance were not targeted).

Concern and Knowledge

- Concern about pollution (including both ocean/river/beach pollution and neighborhood litter/pollution) is at a moderately high level, although it is slightly depressed among residents overall and among most of the target segments relative to 2001.
 - A similar pattern occurs for most other areas of public concern, indicating that on a relative basis storm water pollution is about as important to residents now as during prior public education efforts.
- Despite the small decline in concern, most residents nonetheless consider themselves to be knowledgeable about neighborhood litter and pollution and its effects on the environment.
 - There has been a notable increase in the percentage of target audience residents (Neat Neighbors, Fix It Foul-Ups and Rubbish Rebels) who consider themselves to be “very knowledgeable” about these issues, suggesting that the successive public education efforts have made residents feel well-informed about this topic.

Message Awareness and Attitudes

- The “Erase the Waste” campaign, especially its television ads, appears to have successfully reached the public with its messages about neighborhood litter/pollution and pollution of the ocean/rivers/beaches.
- About two-thirds (64%) of residents have seen or heard messages about pollution of the oceans, rivers and beaches in the past few months, an increase over past years that suggests the impact of repeated public education campaigns.
 - Most recall ocean/river/beach pollution messages from television (71%), while somewhat fewer recall them from newspapers (33%) and radio (15%).
- Nearly one-third have heard messages about litter or pollution in neighborhoods, with half recalling seeing the messages on television, indicating the impact of this medium for the current campaign.
 - Thirty-one percent of residents recall reading neighborhood litter/pollution messages in newspapers, while 10% heard them on the radio, 8% saw them on a billboard and 7% saw them in a brochure or pamphlet.

- The campaign's messages about specific sources of litter/pollution appear to have made an impact among County residents.
 - On an unaided basis, about one-third of residents recall litter being mentioned in the ads, suggesting that the messages targeting this source of pollution have been especially successful.
 - Unaided, 23% of those who saw or heard messages recall the ads mentioning cigarette butts, up from 14% in the 2001 survey.
 - Food wrapper messages are recalled by 10%, up from 3% in 2001.
 - Relative to 2001, however, fewer residents recall messages about dog waste as a source of litter/pollution on an unaided basis.
- Aided, most residents recall messages about picking up after their pets (75%), proper disposal of cigarettes (66%), the impact of litter or pollution on families' health (62%) and proper disposal of fast food wrappers (54%).
 - The very high aided awareness of dog waste messages relative to unaided awareness of the same issue suggests that residents consider dog waste a special category and do not automatically think of it when asked about litter or pollution. This supports targeting this behavior specifically because residents would be unlikely to make changes in this area in response to more generalized anti-littering messages.
- While most residents find the messages meaningful, thought-provoking, informative and change-inspiring, these persuasion measures are slightly lower than in 2001.
 - These lower persuasion measures may be in part a result of the lack of messaging on this topic in the years immediately prior to the current campaign.
 - Additionally, the lower scores may be in keeping with residents' somewhat lower level of concern about these problems and their high degree of confidence that they are already knowledgeable about these issues.

Behavior Change Intentions

- Residents' expressed willingness to change specific polluting behaviors, including behaviors targeted in the campaign messages, is generally near or above the high levels seen in previous survey waves and has increased overall for Neat Neighbors and Fix It Foul-Ups, two of the key target audiences for the campaign.
- Nearly half of Neat Neighbors and Rubbish Rebels claim to have changed at least one of their polluting behaviors in the past year.

Polluting Behaviors

- Residents' actual behavior has improved both for County residents as a whole and among most of the target audiences for the types of polluting behaviors specifically targeted by the campaign.
 - Individual polluting behaviors such as various forms of littering have generally declined since the baseline study and are engaged in by about one-fifth of residents. This suggests that campaign messages about these forms of pollution and behavior change have been successful.
 - In contrast, household-based lawn/garden maintenance activities that contribute to storm water pollution, are engaged in by about one-sixth of residents and have generally increased, suggesting opportunities for future campaign efforts that target these sources of storm water pollution.

Conclusions

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- Los Angeles County residents continue to maintain a moderately high level of concern regarding pollution of oceans/rivers/beaches and their neighborhoods. The “Erase the Waste” campaign appears to address these concerns with messages that residents find memorable and change-inspiring.
- The campaign connects with residents’ concerns and willingness to change their polluting behavior and, for the types of polluting behaviors specifically targeted in the campaign messages, appears to be lessening the polluting behavior of key target groups.
 - County residents have reduced some of their individual polluting behaviors such as various forms of littering and failing to clean up after their dogs, indicating that these targeted messages are having an impact.
 - Given that Countywide public education efforts on these issues were inactive for two years immediately preceding the current campaign, these gains are especially significant.
- The pattern of message awareness and behavior change between 1997, 2001 and 2004 suggests that some residents’ behavior worsened during the time that County communication efforts were less active and then improved again during the current campaign, especially in response to the broadcast television messages.
 - This pattern underlines the important role of visual broadcast media and of consistent, continual messaging in accomplishing change in polluting behavior.
- Polluting behaviors, such as lawn/garden maintenance activities, and resident groups that were not targets of campaign messages did not show improvements and, in many cases, have worsened since 2001.
 - These differences highlight the relative effectiveness of the targeted messages and suggest that expanded targeting with messages tailored to each key audience and additional behaviors could further reduce storm drain pollutant volume.

Points for Consideration

- Given both the end of the current contract in 2005 and the Board's commitment to improving water, considerable public education work remains to be done. Points to consider regarding this work include:
 - What are the future goals for SWRCB public education efforts for Los Angeles County (e.g., reductions in specific pollutants, new concerns or areas of focus)?
 - Should future campaigns focus on the same pollutants and behaviors, expand to a wider list or rotate sequentially through a longer list of pollutants and behaviors
 - Should future campaigns target the same resident groups or should the audiences for the messages be broadened?
 - What other state or local education efforts can future campaigns coordinate with in order to maximize pollution reduction impact without duplication of efforts?
 - Given limited budgets, what role should various media, especially broadcast media, play in future campaigns?
 - What additional fine-tuning of the campaign and its messages can most help achieve SWRCB's goals?